

December, 1885, the following resolution was passed: 'That the alternative plan laid before the Board (Stony Point) this evening be forwarded to the Marine Department, and that the Government be requested to give its sanction to either plan approved at the earliest possible date.' I may state that the alternative plan was the plan submitted to the Board by the Board's Engineer, which laid the work to the eastward of Sir John Coode's work, and which would have given all the advantages, and more than the advantages, of the latter, had it been possible to have carried it out.

78. *Mr. Whyte.*] Was not some theory of the drifting of the sand found to be incorrect?—Yes. In Sir John Coode's plan a large portion of his work was an open iron viaduct, and all that portion of the work shown as far as the wings. Sir John Coode's plan was to allow the drifting of the sand from the west towards the east. It was found there was not the slightest drift of sand in that direction; in fact, the sand was going in a different way altogether. Another point I would like to call attention to is this: Sir John Coode's plan for £196,000 only provided for the work without the wings. With the wings the estimated cost was about £260,000. Without the wings the work would have been practically useless, according to Sir John Coode's own admission in his report. I was going to show how this site was fixed. The site was fixed by the Government Engineer. Two plans were submitted to him—both schemes are shown in the sketch plan attached to Mr. Higginson's report. I would just call the attention of the Committee to that portion of Mr. Higginson's report dealing with the fixing of the site, which shows that the plan was fixed by the Government Engineer. Mr. Higginson says, "The foregoing extracts from the correspondence will show that the Board used every endeavour to have the most suitable site fixed upon." I would like to call attention particularly to this because the impression has got abroad that the Board fixed the site with the Board's Engineer. Referring to Mr. Higginson's report, on page 2, we find that, "Upon the 29th October, 1886, the Board wrote to the Minister, Marine Department, intimating that, as their Engineer had prepared plans differing somewhat from Sir John Coode's, they sent their Engineer with them to Wellington, where he was informed that it would be unnecessary to consult Sir John on the matter, provided that the Minister was satisfied. These plans were left in Wellington, and ultimately approved by the Governor in Council. As it was some time before this was done, the Engineer prepared an alternative plan of a breakwater, now known as the 'Stony Point plan.' The department did not consider that this possessed advantages over the first, which had been authorised in December; and the Board, being satisfied with the scheme, began work at once, and have expended—at that date—about £20,000 on railway, plant, wharf, viaduct, and block-yard. On the 14th September, upon the requisition of Mr. W. L. Rees and others, a public meeting was held to protest against the breakwater being built on the authorised site, and to advocate its construction at Stony Point. A committee was formed, with Mr. W. L. Rees as chairman, who waited on the Board and laid their views before them. The Board agreed to ask Messrs. Blackett, Goodall, and Napier Bell, with their own Engineer, Mr. John Thomson, to consult as to the best site for the breakwater; but, before doing so, decided to lay the matter before Mr. Blackett to see if he considered there were sufficient grounds for making the change, and instructed their Engineer to draw up a report stating the relative advantages of the two sites. This was laid before the Board at their meeting on the 12th October, while at the same meeting Mr. Rees's committee sent in a document formulating their views. Before submitting the latter to Government, the Board asked their Engineer to report to them on the 'objections and suggestions.' This was done in accordance with the following resolution of the Board: 'That the report of the committee of the public meeting, and objections, be referred to the Engineer to consider and report thereon; and that the Engineer's report, along with the copy of objections, be forwarded to the Governor with a request that if sufficient cause be shown the Governor will sanction the reconsideration by a consulting engineer of the several schemes of a breakwater.' I now enclose these three documents, with the object of asking if Mr. Blackett considers there are sufficient grounds for annulling the authorised plan in favour of Stony Point; and, if so, does he think it [necessary to call in Messrs. Goodall and Bell?] The reply received from the Marine Department in answer, dated 29th November, 1886, was as follows: 'I have the honour, by direction of the Minister having charge of this department, to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 29th ultimo, submitting to the Government the proposal which has been made to the Board that the Gisborne breakwater should be constructed at Stony Point instead of at the site approved by the Governor in Council; and, in reply, I am to state that the Government, after having carefully considered the matter, see no reason for agreeing to the proposed change of site.' The Government absolutely refused to sanction any change of site.

79. *Mr. Ross.*] The plan upon which the work was constructed was originally furnished to the department by your Engineer?—The present plan was submitted, and also an alternative plan for works further to the eastward, which would, if carried out, have been better as a harbour of refuge than the works as laid down in Sir John Coode's plan.

80. The present plan was submitted to the Marine Department and approved by the Governor in Council; then, afterwards, you submitted the alternative plan—the Stony Point plan? Mr. Higginson says that "upon the 29th October, 1886, the Board wrote to the Minister, Marine Department, intimating that, as their Engineer had prepared plans differing somewhat from Sir John Coode's, they sent their Engineer with them to Wellington." "These plans were left in Wellington, and ultimately approved by the Governor in Council. As it was some time before this was done, the Engineer prepared an alternative plan of a breakwater, now known as the 'Stony Point plan'?"—The Government had this alternative plan known as Stony Point before them before they agreed to the present plan.

81. We would not gather this from that report?—That is so; though, with reference to the fixing of the site, there was a report as to the relative merits of the two sites by the Engineer.

82. *The Chairman.*] Anything the Engineer can give, I think it would be better to leave to him. You can bring that out from him in evidence?—Mr. Ormond seems to think the only advantage to be derived from the spending of this £40,000 now asked for in the Bill would be to allow